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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (10/16): 20 YEARS AFTER THE COLD
WAR: "ARAB FAILURE"

Main Stories:

Al Ayyam and Al Hayat Al Jadida lead with stories about Palestinian unity talks in Egypt. Al Quds front pages the topic but leads with news about on-going preparations for the Fatah party congress. Regarding unity talks, the papers report that Palestinian Authority President Abbas continues to refuse direct talks with Hamas, while both parties are being pressured by Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia to show progress towards unity. In other Fatah-Hamas news, Al Quds' front page reports that Fatah official Hatem Abdul Qadir warned of possible plans by Hama's to assassinate Palestinian officials and security chiefs, as reported by Israeli daily Yeadon Amaranth. Hama's spokesman Ismail Radian denied the existence of such plans, the papers note.

Al Heat Al Jidda's lead photo shows the funeral of a Palestinian teenager killed by Israeli soldiers near the West Bank city of Ramallah on October 14. Together with Al Ayah, the two papers front page news of the killing of a second teen by Israeli settlers near Ramallah on October 15. The second teen was killed when settlers opened fire on Palestinians "protesting" the killing of the first teen, according to reporting. All papers highlight that Israeli soldiers looked on as settlers danced around the ambulance carrying the second teen's body and blocked the vehicle's departure. In a related story, the three dailies run eyewitnesses accounts of how a young Palestinian was assaulted by Israeli soldiers near the Nablus area checkpoint Howard on October 15. A final story about the Israeli military runs on page 2 of Al Ayah, noting plans by Israeli Defense Forces to conduct exercises near Gaza, a move that is causing concern among Gaza's over possible Israeli incursions into the Strip.

Al Quads and Al Heat Al Jaded highlight the October 15 visit by an

American Consulate delegation to the Nablus Chamber of Commerce on inside pages. The Consulate's delegation was headed by Chief of the Economic Section Jonathan Carpenter who met with Palestinian officials and businessmen. The group discussed the economic situation and Israeli "siege" on the city of Nablus, according to coverage.

Al Quads publishes a front page report stating that 550 "extremist Jews," guarded by dozens of Israeli police and armed guards, stormed the Al Aqua mosque compound in Jerusalem on October 16. The paper notes that the incident is the latest in a string of "provocations," the height of which came on Yom Kippur when another group of [Israeli] "settlers" stormed the compound.

Israel wants to reduce the number of Palestinian prisoners that would be released in exchange for kidnapped Israeli soldier Shalit under any deal with Hamas, according to Al Quds' front page and an inside story in Al Ayyam. Citing Egyptian sources, the paper adds that Israel fears the release of 1,000 Palestinian prisoners would trigger wide-spread protest in Israel.

Al Quds and Al Hayat Al Jadida run front page coverage of a recent poll of Gazans conducted by Near East Consulting. All papers report that the poll reveals that 40% of Gaza residents are considering immigration and 56% are living below the poverty line.

Al Ayyam runs a front page photo of the New York stock exchange, introducing an article that includes comments by President Bush and White House officials that the U.S. economy is currently in a state of crisis but will, "heal" over the long run.

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BLOCK QUOTES:

¶1. Hani Hurani opines in Al Ayyam under the title "An increasingly chaotic world" (10/16): "In a nutshell, the image of the Arab world, 20 years after the end of the Cold War, suggests that it has been failed to face up to the challenges of economic and political reform and realize stable societies. This Arab failure [stands in contrast to] the achievements of Eastern Europe during the same period. This failure is reflected externally and regionally in the form of increasing weakness in the face of Israeli intransigence and escalation to devour occupied Palestinian land."

¶2. Columnist Hasan Al Batal writes in Al Ayyam under the title, "Genocide against Palestinian olives!" (10/16): "[Israeli] settlers' crimes against Palestinian olive trees can be categorized as a "genocide against Palestinian flora" which is another form of a war of annihilation, reminiscent of the crimes perpetrated by early white settlers in America when they adopted "the annihilation war." They threw blankets contaminated with the smallpox disease out of their fortresses, after they learned that Red Indians had no immunity against the epidemic."

Walles